

Message Text

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CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 OFA-01 COME-00 DLOS-04

DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-04 ERDA-07 FMC-02 TRSE-00

H-02 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-02

OES-05 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

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SUBJ: LAW OF THE SEA: PRESS STATEMENTS BY CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

AMERASINGHE (SRI LANKA) AND USYG ZULETA

1. AT PRESS CONFERENCE 11 MARCH 1976 LOS CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN AMERASINGHE MADE STATEMENT EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LOS MEETING TO BEGIN MONDAY, 15 MARCH, CALLING ITS "MOST CRUCIAL SESSION" UP TO NOW BECAUSE IT IS FIRST TIME THERE IS A SINGLE NEGOTIATING TEXT EMANATING FROM THREE MAIN COMMITTEES, EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND ADDING THAT THERE WILL BE NO DISCUSSION OF THE TEXT BUT NEGOTIATIONS WILL PROCEED IMMEDIATELY "FROM THE WORD GO" IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION AMERASINGHE MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:
A) SINGLE NEGOTIATING TEXT: THE SINGLE NEGOTIATING TEXT (SNG) IS THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS; IT IS NOT A FINAL TEXT, BUT INFORMAL IN CHARACTER. AMENDMENTS INTRODUCED WILL BE CONSIDERED INFORMAL AMENDMENTS. ALTHOUGH SECURITY AGREEMENT ON A SINGLE NEGOTIATING TEXT IS BIGGEST LOS SUCCESS TO DATE, "WE HAVE NOT HAD NEGOTIATION YET SO CAN'T SAY IF WE HAVE SUCCEEDED OR NOT."

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B) MAIN ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED: AMERASINGHE SEES THE THREE

MAIN ISSUES TO BE NEGOTIATED AS 1) MAXIMUM BREADTH OF TERRITORIAL SEA, 2) EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONES -- RIGHTS OF STATES, AND 3) UNIMPEDED PASSAGE THROUGH STRAITS, BUT ADDED THAT ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY AND DEEP SEABED MINING WERE "ALSO FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS". WITH REGARD TO THE QUESTION OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF NO AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON 200 MILE ECONOMIC ZONE AND STATES DECIDE TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION, AMERASINGHE REPLIED THAT HE COULD NOT SPECULATE WHAT THEY MIGHT DO ADDING THAT IT DEPENDED ON HOW INDIVIDUAL STATES TAKE UNILATERAL ACTIONS. HE POINTED OUT THAT "SOME COUNTRIES HAVE ALREADY TAKEN UNILATERAL ACTION AND MANY ARE NOT TOO HAPPY ABOUT IT." AMERASINGHE SAID THAT "IF THERE IS NO AGREEMENT THIS YEAR I WOULD BE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE FUTURE . . . IF THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS THIS YEAR IT WOULD BE POSITIVELY BLEAK." THERE WOULD BE NOTHING TO PREVENT A GRAB BY NATIONS FOR ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE SEA IN HIS VIEW. UN UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL ZULETA STATED THAT DURING CONSULTATIONS ON EXPLOITATION BEYOND THE 200 MILE LIMIT HELD SO FAR "THE ATMOSPHERE SEEMS TO BE CONDUCIVE TO SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS." AMERASINGHE ADDED THAT AS SOME HOPE FOR SUCCESS EMERGED FROM THE GENEVA AND CARACAS SESSIONS, HE FEELS PARTICIPANTS ARE "INDEED EARNEST ABOUT REACHING AGREEMENT."

C) CURRENT LOS SESSION: AMERASINGHE SAID AFTER THE INITIAL PLENARY SESSION, MARCH 15, COMMITTEES WOULD GO INTO CLOSED SESSIONS (NOT OPEN TO THE PRESS) AND FURTHER OPEN PLENARY MEETINGS WOULD BE PLAYED BY EAR. OPI WOULD KEEP PRESS INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS, BUT "THERE WILL BE A MINIMUM OF OPEN MEETINGS." AMERASINGHE ADDED THERE WOULD BE 156 FULL PARTICIPANTS IN LOS DEBATE.

D) POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS: AMERASINGHE SAID THAT A CONVENTION COULD BE SIGNED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR OR FIRST OF NEXT YEAR EVEN IF FOLLOW UP MEETING IS NECESSARY THIS YEAR TO PUT FINAL TOUCHES TO TEXT. HOWEVER, HE ADMITTED THAT POSSIBILITY OF A FIFTH AND SIXTH SESSION TO COMPLETE THE WORK OF THE FOURTH IS "NOT IMPROBABLE, BECAUSE IT IS THE FACT THAT WE ARE ONLY REALLY BEGINNING TO NEGOTIATE." BUT ADDED THAT "THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE CAN'T ACHIEVE REMARKABLE SUCCESS AT THISSESSION."

E) ICELAND/BRITISH COD WAR: AMERASINGHE SAID THIS IS A UNCLASSIFIED

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BILATERAL DISPUTE AND WON'T FIGURE IN THE LOS DEBATE.

2. UN UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL ZULETA IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT ADDED TO THE ABOVE THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL HAS DECIDED TO ADDRESS TO OPENING SESSION AND THAT THE LATIN AMERICAN GROUP HAS OFFICIALLY INFORMED THE SECRETARIAT THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE IS RESIGNING BECAUSE OF PRESSING GOVERNMENT BUSINESS AND AMBASSADOR OF VENEZUELA WILL REPLACE

HIM.
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